

Home Circle.

THE CHILD'S CRY.

I thought myself indeed secure,
So fast the door, so firm the lock;
But, lo! he toddling comes to lure
My parent ear with timorous knock.
My heart were stone could it withstand
The sweetness of my baby's plea—
That timorous baby knocking and
"Please let me in—it's only me."
I threw aside the unfinished book,
Regardless of its tempting charms,
And opening wide the door, I took
My laughing darling in my arms.
Who knows but in eternity
I, like a truant child, shall wait
The glories of a life to be,
Beyond the heavenly Father's gate?
And will that heavenly Father heed
The truant's supplicating cry,
As at the outer door I plead,
"Tis I, O Father! only I!"

—Eugene Field.

ROYAL CHILDREN.

The Madrid correspondent of the London St. Paul's gives some pleasant glimpses of the king of Spain, who is well along in his tenth year. He describes him as a natural, lovable boy, whose life has been much more simple and free from luxury and indulgence than that of the heirs of many English and American wealthy parents.

His mother keeps him and his sisters with her, except when she attends to her state duties. The routine of the days is regular, and their food of the plainest. Almost every afternoon she with the children goes to service in the chapel of the Convent of the Assumption; and, when it is over, the little king begs to be allowed "to stay and play with the nuns." The quiet garden of the convent is the one place where the rigid ceremonial of the Spanish court cannot enter. The good sisters amuse him as they would any other child.

One of them, an Englishwoman, gave him lately a little dog, which he thought was ivory, but which was only soap. He was much pleased with his new toy; but a week later, being in the convent garden, he ran to her and said, "I took my dog in to bathe with me, and he has grown thin and small. What shall I do?"

Not long ago, when out driving with his nurse, Alfonso saw some boys of his own size, and struggled to get out of the carriage and go to them.

"But you must not," said the nurse.

"Why must I not play? They are playing," he cried.

"Because, your majesty—because you are the king."

"Then, please, nurse, let me be just a little boy," he cried.

Another child ruler, Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, visited England not long since. Her mother, like the queen regent of Spain, is training her child to simple habits and to a natural, unselfish life. She went shopping with the little queen, or visited the museums, as quietly and unostentatiously as any gentlewoman with her daughter would have done. But the sweet manner and smiling face of *die kleine Konigin* won all hearts.

The object of the visit to England was that Wilhelmina should meet the three young princes, one of whom she is expected to marry. For this child cannot, like other girls, grow up to choose from all other men the one whom she loves best to be nearest to her through life. All of the great powers in Europe may have a political interest in her marriage.

These chance glimpses into the lives of children born to a crown make us wonder whether those who are "just the little girls and boys," whom Alfonso envied, are not the happiest, after all.—*Youth's Companion*.

LET THE BOYS HELP.

Why is it that the boys are allowed to sit around a house doing nothing, while their overworked mother is struggling against nature and fate to do about half the work?

Only the other day we saw three large, able bodied boys lounging about the house, not knowing what to do with themselves, while their mother, tired and pale, was trying to do the work for a large family and company alone. Not a boy's work to help about the house? Why not? Is there anything about washing dishes that will injure him or which he cannot learn to do well, or about making beds, or sweeping, or setting the table, or washing, or ironing, or cooking a plain meal of victuals? On the contrary, there is much to benefit him in such work, the most important of which is the idea that it isn't manly to let the "weaker vessel" carry all the burdens when it is possible for strong young hands to help. Most boys would gladly help if they were asked to do so, and were taught how to do the work properly. Many a smart boy wants to help his tired mother, but doesn't know how beyond bringing in the wood and the water, and shoveling a path through the snow. This done, she tells him to go and play, while she plods wearily on. Not a boy's work? For shame! It is a positive harm to a boy's moral character to allow him to think it right to be idle while his mother is staggering under her burdens. Let the boys help, and those who can't get help "for love or money," as they often write to us, will see their troubles disappear.—*Philadelphia Methodist*.

FOR SUCH AS SHE.

"Ma'am, can I go in there?" asked a little deformed girl of a lady, one Sunday morning just as she was about to enter a fashionable church. "Ma'am, can I go in there?"—at the same moment pulling the lady's dress, and turning up to her own a pitiful, pleading face.

For a moment the lady was a bit disconcerted. The face was so sallow, and her clothes were so shabby, and her poor little body was so crooked. But, instantly recovering herself, she said to the little girl, "Yes, you may; come with me." Then, taking the little one by the hand, she led her into the church and into her own pew.

Deeply interested in all she saw and heard, our little friend was especially impressed with the music, and particularly by the singing to a wondrously sweet tune of the familiar hymn beginning:

And must this body die,
This well-wrought frame decay?

Presently the lady felt a vigorous pull at her dress, and with an eager whisper the little one exclaimed, "Oh, ma'am, did you hear that?" Just at that moment the choir was singing:

Arrayed in glorious grace,
Shall these vile bodies shine,
And every form and every face
Be heavenly and divine.

At the close of the service the lady asked the little girl "Did you specially like that hymn, my dear?"

"Oh, yes," said she; "I enjoyed it very much."

"And can you tell me why?" said the lady in the gentlest manner possible.

"You see," said the child, at the same moment pointing to a very lovely lady who had occupied an adjacent pew, "you see," she said, her eyes swimming with tears, "I am going to be just as beautiful as that lady up there."

"In heaven, you mean?" said the lady.

"Yes ma'am."

"Then you hope to go there?"

Fixing her large, eager eyes on the face of the enquirer, the child, with a voice thrilling with emotion, exclaimed: "Don't you suppose Jesus died for just such crooked ones as me?"—*Epworth Herald*.

AT SLEEPY-TIME.

ELIZABETH HARMAN.

There's a little cradle close to mother's bed,
Where a sleepy lambkin soon will lay his head;
Not a woolly baa-lamb—that would never do—
But a little baby—just like you!

—*The Independent*.

The greatest duty every father owes to his children is to walk where it will be safe for them to follow.